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News Release

For Immediate Release

Fire Department Urges Caution When Cooking

With Thanksgiving upon us, the Springfield Fire Department is reminding residents of some simple steps to prevent a fire this holiday season. According to the National Fire Protection Association, cooking equipment is the leading cause of home structure fires and associated civilian injuries and the third leading cause of home fire deaths. Unattended cooking was by far the leading contributing factor in these fires. Ranges accounted for the largest share (58%) of home cooking fire incidents. Ovens accounted for 16%. In the last year, Springfield firefighters have responded to more than 50 fires that started in the kitchen.

Prevention is the key.

To help prevent a devastating cooking fire, stay in the kitchen while cooking. Use a timer to remind you that you are cooking. And keep combustibles away from the stovetop, including oven mitts, towels, paper towels, etc. Finally, never use foil or metal in a microwave.

When in doubt, get out!

Three of every five (58%) reported non-fatal home cooking fire injuries occurred when the victims tried to fight the fire themselves. If you feel the fire is small enough to try and put out yourself, make sure you know the proper way to do it. For a small fire in a pan on the stove, use an oven mitt to slide the lid over it and turn off the burner. Leave the lid on until it is completely cool. Never use water to extinguish a stove top fire! For a small fire in the oven, turn off the heat and keep the door closed until the fire goes out. Finally, for a small microwave fire, turn it off and unplug it. Keep the door closed until the fire is completely out.

Most injuries not caused by fire.

In 2009, ranges or ovens were involved in an estimated 17,300 thermal burn injuries seen in U.S. hospital emergency rooms. 90% resulted from contact with the hot equipment or some other non-fire source. Children under five face a higher risk of non-fire burns associated with cooking than of being burned in a cooking fire. It is best to keep children away from the kitchen while cooking.

Turkey fryers still a danger.

Turkey fryers have grown in popularity in recent years along with the dangers of using them. If you choose to cook your turkey in a turkey fryer, remember that they should only be used outdoors (not inside or in your garage!). And be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions, including the type of cooking oil you should use.

For media only:

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